

F.B.I. INVESTIGATES STATE DEPT. LEAKS

Agents Question Personnel

— Use of Lie-Detectors on Officials Reported

By FRED P. GRAHAM

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 2 — State Department personnel are being questioned by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in an effort to determine how recent sensitive information leaked to the press, the department's press spokesman disclosed today.

The spokesman, Robert J. McCloskey, said in response to reporters' questions at a press briefing, that the investigation had been prompted by concern that "stories harmful to the national interest" were being disclosed by unauthorized persons. He repeatedly declined to make a denial when asked about reports that F.B.I. agents were giving State Department officials lie-detector tests in efforts to locate the sources of the news leaks.

Mr. McCloskey said the F.B.I. questioning was being done "with the approval of the Secretary of State," but he declined to say who had ordered it. Powell Moore, an official in the Justice Department's information office, said that the investigation had been ordered by that department's Internal Security Division.

Mr. Moore said that such action was taken whenever there was evidence of violations of the Federal security laws, and that the current questioning had extended to other departments, including the Pentagon. The Federal Bureau of Investigation is an agency of the Justice Department.

The questioning by F.B.I. and the reported use of lie-detectors has touched sensitive nerves in the State Department, where, officials say, the bureau has not been active since it investigated charges of Communist infiltration

The State Department has its own security force that is supposed to investigate security leaks.

In recent weeks newsmen who report on the State Department have found that people there would not see them or answer their telephone calls. Today, at his regular noon briefing, Mr. McCloskey was asked a series of questions about the investigation and other official actions that have apparently prompted officials to close their doors to the press.

Taboos Conceded

Mr. McCloskey conceded that certain subjects had been temporarily placed off limits for discussion with the press by State Department personnel. These include President Nixon's coming trip to China and the one-man election campaign of South Vietnam's President Nguyen Van Thieu.

But Mr. McCloskey insisted, "I have told them that people need not close doors or refuse to return phone calls because a subject for a period may be off limits for general distribution." He said there had been no efforts to limit "contacts" between State Department personnel and the press, but only to persuade officials to "use their common sense in dealing with the journalists."

"The State Department has a deep concern, and I would expect the public in general would understand, that information that could be prejudicial to the national interest in foreign policy is not to be published or broadcast," Mr. McCloskey said.

Times Article Mentioned

He said that F.B.I. agents had approached State Department officials "on a number of occasions," but he would not say what news articles had been involved.

Some individuals who were questioned said that the agents asked about an article by William Beecher in The New York Times of July 22, giving details of United States negotiators' positions in the arms limitations talks with the Soviet Union.

Others were asked about an earlier article by Tad Szulc in The New York Times about arms shipments to Pakistan.

Mr. McCloskey said, "To the best of my knowledge, no disciplinary action has been taken against any person questioned." Asked if a reprimand or notation placed in a Foreign Service officer's record was a disciplinary action, he said that such a reprimand would not necessarily be considered a disciplinary action.

He declined to say if officials had been asked to sign affidavits saying whether they had talked to certain reporters.

STATINTL

Use of Lie Tests by FBI Reported in Capital News Leaks

BY ROBERT C. TOTII

Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—FBI agents have questioned State and Defense department officials—and reportedly some in the Central Intelligence Agency and White House—in search of news leaks in recent months.

At a press briefing Thursday, State Department spokesman Robert J. McCloskey was asked whether polygraph (lie detector) tests had been used in the investigation.

While confirming FBI activity at his and "other agencies," he declined to say what kind of equipment was used. Phone taps and the taking of affidavits normally would be used in such work.

The Associated Press reported that four State Department officials were given polygraph tests. The department refused to comment on the report.

None Disciplined or Reprimanded

No State Department official had been disciplined or reprimanded, McCloskey said. Other sources said all State Department personnel who were questioned had been cleared.

McCloskey indicated that the investigations began earlier this year and were still going on but he refused to pinpoint the number of subjects of stories under scrutiny as well as the number of personnel who came under suspicion.

It was learned, however, that while several earlier stories drew FBI interest—presumably at White House direction—the most intensive investigation began six weeks ago after publication by the New York Times of an article detailing this country's latest bargaining position at the secret strategic arms limitation talks with the Soviet Union.

This particular case may have a pedestrian and even bizarre explanation. About the time of the New York Times article, a top-secret document on the talks was distributed in considerable confusion within the State Department, informants said.

Some offices got two, even three, copies of a document that should have received none. This ubiquitous document contained the

material that was published.

The investigation of this article, however, appears to be the broadest and deepest of its kind in at least a decade. The Kennedy and Johnson administrations both sought the source of news leaks from time to time but never in as sustained or exhaustive fashion as that begun after the July 23 story on the arms talks.

Use of the polygraph, if true, may be a precedent, although there were unconfirmed reports of the detector's use during the Eisenhower administration. The four officials subjected to the test, the AP reported, had all acknowledged talking to the writer of the New York Times article, William Beecher, but all denied giving him the information and were cleared by the device.

Beecher's story said U.S. negotiators had proposed a mutual halt in construction of land and submarine-based missiles and curtailment of antimissile deployments. The State Department termed the article at the time "A most unfortunate breach of security and violation of our understanding with the Soviet Union that neither side will discuss these talks while they are in progress."

Subjects Identified

State Department officials, beyond being investigated, also have been recently warned to be discreet in talking to reporters on particularly sensitive subjects, McCloskey said. He identified these as the arms talks, President Nixon's forthcoming trip to China, and temporarily on the Saigon deliberations on a one-man presidential election.

No written caution has been issued, McCloskey added. But he said he has urged officials to use "common sense" in discussing such topics.

The stories that have sparked investigations this year within the agencies have all been judged

"harmful to the national interest" by the department and the Administration, McCloskey said. They were unrelated to publication of the Pentagon Papers, informants said.

McCloskey emphasized that no attempt was being made to restrict the access of newsmen to officials. He noted that the department enjoys the reputation of being the most open foreign ministry in the world to the press and intends to remain so.

Informants said that, in addition to State and Defense department officials, certain CIA and White House employees had been questioned by FBI agents. They could not elaborate.

STATINTL

State Dept. Leaks Were Probed by FBI

By JEFFREY ANTEVIL

Washington, Sept. 2 (NEWS Bureau)—Justice Department agents have been questioning State Department employees about recent leaks of sensitive information to the newspapers, a State Department spokesman disclosed today.

Questioned by newsmen, the spokesman, Robert J. McCloskey, would not say how many State Department employees were involved or whether lie detectors were used. But he said no disciplinary action resulted.

The probe, it was learned, was conducted by FBI agents.

Series of Probes

McCloskey said there was no single investigation but a series of them aimed at specific news stories.

He would not name any of the articles, but other officials said two recent incidents involved separate New York Times' stories quoting from a CIA report to the White House and setting out the U.S. negotiating position at the disarmament talks with the Soviet Union.

Another leak under investigation, sources said, was Jack Anderson's nationally syndicated column quoting from a secret government report on the drunken antics of a U.S. diplomat during Vice President Spiro Agnew's recent visit to Kenya in Africa.

McCloskey also said State Department officials have been told to use "discretion and common sense" in talking with newsmen about sensitive topics such as the forthcoming presidential visit to China.

"The Department has a deep concern when information that could be prejudicial to a national interest in foreign policy is published or broadcast," especially when it has been disclosed "by unauthorized persons," the spokesman said.

He added, however, that officials have not been told to limit their contacts with reporters. He declared that the department offers greater access to newsmen than any other foreign office in the world.

Approved by Rogers

"We have cooperated with agents of the Department of Justice who have undertaken investigations within the Department of State," McCloskey said. He would not say who ordered the agents into the State Department but he said it was done "with the full concurrence and approval" of Secretary of State William P. Rogers.